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SUBJECT: USNATO RESPONSE TO ISRAELI MOD NATO PERSPECTIVES

REF: TEL AVIV 01063

Classified By: Charge d'Affairs Richard Olson, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) We appreciated receiving reftel and congratulate Embassy Tel Aviv and EUCOM for engaging with the MOD on the subject of Israel's cooperation with NATO. That engagement showed that there is apparently some confusion amongst GOI officials about the nature of its relationship with NATO. We offer the following as background for Embassy Tel Aviv to draw on in briefing the GOI and provide suggested talking points, should the Embassy wish to re-engage on this topic.

Israel's Partnership with NATO

¶2. (C) Israel's relationship with NATO is through the Mediterranean Dialogue, one of NATO's four partnership programs (the others are: Partnership for Peace (mostly European and Eurasian), the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (Gulf countries) and the Global Partnership. US Policy is to break down the somewhat arbitrary boundaries and barriers between these partnerships, but as currently constituted the Med-D is a collective partnership (in NATO-speak, 26 7) meaning that most of its interaction with the alliance is in conjunction with the other partners. Frankly, this somewhat constrains the ability of the USG to promote "bilateral" Israeli-NATO cooperation, since such cooperation must take place at 26 7.

¶3. (C) The sole area where Israel's relationship with NATO is bilateral (in NATO-speak, 26 1) is in the development of Israel's Individual Cooperation Program (ICP), which is the document in which Israel outlines the areas in which it seeks to benefit from Alliance, e.g., by seeking training opportunities. Israel is the only Med-D country to have filed an ICP and we support Israeli efforts to take full benefit of the ICP.

¶4. (C) The comment that Israel would perhaps be interested in becoming a "global partner" seems odd from the NATO perspective, since global partnership was created to recognize a category of countries that while cooperating with NATO, previously did not have a formal partnership relationship with the Alliance. Since Israel is part of

Med-D, it already has such a formalized relationship. Some Allies might argue that Israel gets more under Med-D than it would under GP, although as noted above the USG seeks to break down boundaries between the partnerships.

OAE Liaison

15. (C) When Israel agreed to join Operation ACTIVE ENDEAVOR (OAE) last September, the resulting Exchange of Letters authorized Israel to provide liaison officers within various sub-commands of NATO's Joint Forces Command-Naples (JFC-Naples), including Allied Component Command Maritime (CCMAR)-Naples/Commander, Active Endeavor (COM AE), and/or within the Task Group Commander (TFE). NATO expects there will be at least one Israeli liaison officer at CCMAR, focusing on intelligence sharing.

NAMS0

16. (U) In order to facilitate case-by-case participation in the NATO Maintenance and Supply Organization (NAMS0), in September 2006, the NAC approved a standard draft MOU between NAMS0 and NATO's Med-D partners, which will become the standard template for all partners. It is incumbent for individual MD states and other partners to craft their own bilateral MOUs with NAMS0 using the NAC-approved template.

17. (C) Israel has not yet approached NATO to negotiate a bilateral MOU. Israel does not appear interested in the MOU, as it does not provide anything more than a framework to make administration easier for occasional NAMS0 procurement from an Israeli firm. Israel wants more, objecting to the distinction, inherent in the standard MOU and in NAMS0, between Shareholders (Allies) and partners. Israel wishes to compete for NAMS0 procurements. However, NATO member states, most notably France, United Kingdom and Belgium will continue to resist any Israeli invitation into potential Weapon System Partnership or other competition from Israeli firms in order to protect their domestic defense industries. USNATO believes Germany is opposed to Israeli participation in NAMS0, but prefers to let other countries express opposition.

Possible Talking Points

18. (U) Releasable to Israel: USNATO believes there is room for enhanced Israeli cooperation with NATO.

-- NATO now offers more than 600 training activities to Med-D countries in 30 areas of cooperation;

-- Israel, in its ICP, indicated it was interested in cooperation in 26 of the areas;

-- Israel may decide to send students and possibly faculty to the NATO School in Oberammergau Germany or to the NATO Defense College (NDC) in Rome;

-- At the NDC, Israel may engage in courses now offered in the Med-D work program or in an expanded Middle East Faculty that will open in Rome later this year;

-- Med-D states now are able to establish Liaison Officers at the Partnership Coordination Cell (PCC) at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers (SHAPE) in Mons, Belgium. Liaison officers will be involved in the planning of activities and operations involving partners;

-- The MOD also may want to designate forces under the Operational Capabilities Concept (OCC)- Level 1 pool of forces, which is designed to evaluate designated forces for NATO interoperability and to provide feedback. Other highly advanced non-NATO militaries including Australia, Austria,

Sweden and Finland have found NATO interoperability tools useful.

¶9. (U) We understand that Israel values Med-D as a venue where it can sit down with Arab countries with which it does not have relations. This has been confirmed on numerous occasions:

-- in April 2006 at the Med-D meeting in Rabat, when Israel's Ambassador invited Med-D countries to expand the dialogue to include meetings of provincial authorities from each Med-D nation;

-- the Egyptian Ambassador Mahmoud Karem proposed at a Med-D luncheon in February, hosted by Ambassador Nuland, that representatives of Israel and Jordan host a seminar on their countries' mutual experience with confidence building measures related to peace treaty implementation. USNATO will seek to develop both the Egyptian and the Israeli proposals at neutral venues, including the NATO Defense College;

-- Israel may also enjoy sustained cooperation with Arab military and national security professionals at the PCC at SHAPE (para 5), NATO schools and in OAE.

¶10. (U) USNATO would be interested to hear MFA views on avenues for Israel's expanded cooperation with NATO.
OLSON